




1  The Soul of the Craft:
Inside the Intentional Technician
Presented to the
Piano Technician's Guild
Phoenix, Arizona
January 5, 2007

2  The Soul of the Craft:
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“Always aim for the high end.”

Willis Snyder

3  The Soul of the Craft:
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“If you can make a radical positive change in the sound and feel of a piano in a relatively short amount of time, you win---big---for the rest of your career.”

Norman Neblett


4  The Soul of the Craft:
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“PIANO WORK IS A WHOLE-BODY, FEELING, **PHYSICAL** EVENT,
NOT AN ANALYTICAL, THOUGHT-BASED, '**NECK-UP**' EVENT.”

David Andersen

5  The Soul of the Craft:
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HI...

6  The Soul of the Craft:

BEFORE WE BEGIN

- Focus
- Language
- I love questions
- Take care of yourself
- Please read and re-read the material

- YOU are in the top tier of this craft---why?

YOU'RE HERE

7 Thank you....

- Tanya Ragir
- Jenika Khalsa
- Steve Bellieu
- Dale Erwin
- Phenoyd Ezra
- Gary Teleen
- Rick Florence
- Roger Jolly
- Melanie Brooks
- Virgil Smith
- Ed Sutton
- Bill Garlick
- Ted Sambell
- Ed Foote
- Richard Davenport
- David Abell

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The Soul of the Craft:
Inside the Intentional Technician

• The Atmosphere

- Where Art meets Craft
- We create beauty; we enable some of the highest expression of human beings...
 - love
 - emotion
 - creativity
 - originality
 - intelligence
 - excellence
 - self-reflection

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- The work it takes on the inside

- Responsibility

- For your actions

- For your state of being

- Do you live as a victim?

- Blaming others

- Blaming yourself

- “Doubt kills the warrior”

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The Atmosphere:

The work it takes on the inside

- Gratitude

- What do you call the most precious thing in the world?

- Behold: the Trillion-Dollar Unit

- Practice gratitude as a craft, a daily discipline

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The Atmosphere:

The work it takes on the inside

- What’s the only thing you can really control?

- The Inner Game

- Self 1 & Self 2

- “watching the seams of the ball”

- The present moment contains everything you want

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The Atmosphere:

The work it takes on the inside

- Reliable Catalysts:

things, actions or situations that repeatedly enable you to feel joy, satisfaction, and love

---It’s important that **music** be in your top 5

---Is piano work on the list?

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The Atmosphere:

the work it takes on the inside

The Golden Rule

---simple yet impossible?

---the greatest business plan in the

world

---ask Warren Buffett

---gives strength and humility in equal

measure

---the most practical and complete path

to success in business

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The Atmosphere:
The work it takes on the inside

- **PASSION:** essential ingredient for

- the high end of our craft

- a successful business

- successful relationships

- a rich and balanced life

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The Atmosphere:
the work it takes on the inside

- **MASTERY:**

Find a niche and **commit**

- Do the work as a continual student

- Get help

- Challenge yourself

- Risk failure

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The Atmosphere:
the work it takes on the inside

- **COMMUNITY**

- **COLLEGIALITY**

- **COLLABORATION**

- The best way (IMO) to grow your business & offer complete piano service

- seeing your skills and your nature realistically

- I was a lone wolf, working small

- the power of an apprentice

- the power of working closely with your peers

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest: Business Practices

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

- Perception

No matter how you rationalize it, the world

works on first impressions
---the atmosphere you bring in with you
---"Blink"

- Excellence

NOT perfection; perfection KILLS

- Relationship

The fountain, the wellspring, of the
MOST ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT
of your success

---it's a craft

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

- TRUST---the rock on which your success is built...
(my mentors all said the same thing)

- Telling the truth **feels** the best, simplest, cleanest

- After a while, clients look forward to paying you.

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

"My reputation is on the line when I recommend [something.] I can't risk that...the public's trust in me is far more valuable than anything I can make on a given sale...the customer's trust is the biggest asset we can have in this business. There is **no reason** not to **get paid** for being trusted."

Ed Foote

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

BE LIKE A DOCTOR

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

- Complete Piano Service

- definition: The ability to understand, diagnose, and implement the work necessary to put a piano in its **maximum** playing condition, and keep it there, through judicious maintenance, throughout its years of use.

- monetizing everything related to pianos

- forces/enables collaboration

- forces/enables being honest about your skillset

- forces/enables expansion, challenge, risk-taking

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

MARKETING: dirty word

or

key to success?

- gut reaction
- examine your prejudice in “the cold light of day”
- selling YOU as you are
- asking for and accepting help

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

MARKETING

- best is relationship and experience-based
- then word-of-mouth
- then reputation

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices
MARKETING

- A good, creative, honest, original web site that reflects your personality is the best local ad you could ever hope to have---like having a TV show in your city/area---guaranteed to pay for itself many times over---

IF

you know what to do....

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Business Practices

MARKETING

A good, creative, honest, original web site that reflects your personality is the **best local ad you could ever hope to have**---like having a TV show in your city/area---guaranteed to pay for itself many times over---

IF

you know what to do....

Search Engine Optimization

Google it!

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest: Working On Pianos

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos

DIAGNOSTICS

- Be like a doctor
- Use your experience
- Trust your intuition
- Fully question the player/client: they're with you through the diagnosis so you can
- "Show and Tell"
 - you'll probably be the first
 - you become the doctor
 - you are the expert, the trusted one

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos

The tools I need for diagnosis

- Blow distance measurer
- Ruler
- Dip block
- Erwin action ratio gauge
- Screwdriver
- Gram weights
- Headlamp
- Magnifier
- String
- Bearing sticks
- String level bubble gauge

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
DIAGNOSTICS

- What I want to find out:
 - blow distance
 - key travel
 - action ratio (ballpark)
 - BW (balance weight---DW + UW divided by 2)
then
- A slo-mo test blow reveals
 - Let-off
 - Drop
 - Spring strength
 - Jack position
 - Friction issues
 - Front rail bushings
 - Balance rail hole & bushings

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Doing the Work
DIAGNOSTICS

- What I want to find out---and how:
 - Shank flange friction
 - Knuckle shape & condition
 - Pluck test
 - Thump test
 - Look at the bridge caps
 - Get a sense of crown & bearing
 - Pedals

- Dampers
 - Timing
 - Upstop
 - Guide rail
 - Flutter point

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
DIAGNOSTICS

- Record the information fully
 - Be like a doctor: record it on voicemail
 - Usually much more detail-rich than filling out a form
 - Find a way to archive it
- then
- Propose a **2-day service**, perhaps with
 - **“Triage restoration”**

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
DIAGNOSTICS

- 2-Day Service typically includes
 - Rebuild pedals, pedal mod as necessary
 - Lubricate and time damper system
 - Refelt upstop rail & damper tray if necessary
 - Lift, level, & seat strings, tap bridge pins
 - Complete cleaning
 - Raise key height, level keys if necessary
 - Miscellaneous mechanical repairs
 - Repin shank flanges if necessary
 - Complete action regulation
 - File hammers
 - Mate hammers to strings
 - Voicing
 - Tuning

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
DIAGNOSTICS

- Triage Restoration may include
 - Rebuilding the keyframe
 - Replacing and/or moving the knuckles
 - Removing mass from hammers
 - Redistributing key leads
 - Repositioning the capstans
 - Shimming the whippen rail (increasing action spread)
 - Replacing bass strings
 - Arledge strings, German loops

*triage restoration is a temporary fix (except for rebuilding the keyframe;) I don't like to do it unless the client agrees to an eventual complete restoration.

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos

REGULATION

- Manufacturer's specs are the beginning....

NOT the end

- Every action is custom-made and slightly different
- Every action has a “sweet spot”---
 - A point of maximum function and good feeling via the interaction of all the regulation points
- Every regulation point has its own “sweet spot”
- The most sensitive part of your body is...?
 - Develop a greater & greater sensitivity
- There’s a move for everything
- GET PRECISE

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
REGULATION

- Blow distance---46mm **minimum**
- Key travel---10.2 mm is ideal & CRUCIAL;
NEVER less than 10mm
- Spring strength
- Jack position
- Jack height
- Backchecks
- Letoff
- Drop
- Aftertouch
- Bubble check

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
REGULATION

- Everything affects everything
- Balance
- Keep doing it with calm attention and focus---you’ll get better in a hurry
- Let your whole body FEEL what the sweet spot is
- Develop your own **custom** way to get repeatably precise and idealized

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos

TUNING

- Tuning as a path to success---a big door-opener
 - I could make a radical positive change right away
 - I liked people and people liked me
- How I learned and progressed
 - my own best friend
 - my own worst enemy
 - MENTORS
- What "The Inner Game of Tennis" taught me
 - self 1 and self 2
 - awareness vs. thoughts
 - RELAX
 - trust your body

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
TUNING

- Tuning priorities:
 - idealized rock-solid temperament
 - follow the fourths
 - double and triple octaves
 - unisons
- Secrets of magnificent tuning:
 - the fourths and "agua"
 - visualizing the perfect unison
 - the courage to stretch
 - beatless triple octaves
- STAY RELAXED AND LOOSE
 - the destructive power of tension & worry
 - enter the world of the sound

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos
TUNING

- Why tuning below the temperament is the key to musicality
 - end of the long bridge: toughest 4 notes in the piano
 - why the bass will eat you up, and why you'll change your career if you learn how to stretch it right
- Test blows and setting the pin: Zen it out without damage or pain
- Hydration---**always** have water with you as you tune.
- Stretching---love your back & arms
 - ...be grateful; you're getting paid to meditate on deep & beautiful sounds

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The Atmosphere Made Manifest:
Working on Pianos

VOICING

- The final frontier---lots of fear around it
- One problem: lack of a repeatable protocol
- I stumbled upon what I'm going to show you 10 years ago
- On a decent set of hammers, **it works beautifully every time** to get the "Golden Tone" we all want & love
- Pre-voicing: absolutely essential; this won't work without it
 - In the shop
 - In the field

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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Carpe Diem
- Raise your rates, because
- YOU BRING IMMENSE VALUE TO YOUR CLIENTS
- Have a lot of fun
- Get “off the grid” frequently
- Make work sacred
- RELAX
- Be exactly who you are

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And, finally.....

EMBRACE the PARADOX:

“Triple-A & the 800-pound gorilla”

THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity---and the precious gift of your attention...

SEE YOU IN ANAHEIM